

Journal. 1912.

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## Bethel, Maine.

1912.

January 3

Clear, cold and absolutely calm. Ther -3° at daybreak +30 at 1 P.M.

I came to Bethel yesterday to spend two days at the Gehrigs'.

When, about ten o'clock this morning, the Doctor and I started for a walk the thermometer stood at 18° but the air was so dry and still that it did not seem cold or even chilly although we wore no overcoats nor any covering for hands or ears. The fields to the south of the house were buried under about six inches of ice-encrested snow very dazzling to the eyes where the rays of the low sun struck across it. Even in this exposed place there was not a breath of wind. In the woods, which we entered by the familiar Glen Road trail, the snow lay seven or eight inches deep and was for the most part soft and powdery. The branches of the pines and spruces were loaded with it whenever the wind had failed to penetrate. The openings among the trees were bathed in bright warm sunlight which illumined even the depths of evergreen groves and thickets.

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by beams which straggled through the canopy of foliage above  
or by the light reflected from the surface of the snow.

Throughout these windless woods there was to-day deeper  
and more impressive silence save when it was broken by  
sounds made by birds or Squirrels. There were not infrequent.

Indeed we rarely walked more than a few hundred yards at any  
one time without hearing Chickadees feeding and Canada Nuthatches  
whining in the spruces and balsams or the calls of Redpolls coming  
from the air overhead. Over the distant calling of White-throats  
Crossbills was heard. The chattering, swishing notes of Red  
Squirrels came, at times, from two or three directions at once.

Most of the Chickadees wore Black-caps but in close  
association with seven or eight of them and with several  
Nuthatches we found two Parus hudsonicus and a single  
bird of the latter kind was met with in company with  
a pair of Nuthatches. This solitary "Hudsonian" uttered



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every now and then - once when he was within two yards of me on a bare twig - a succession of low notes some warbling in quality, others rather sharp and staccato. I wonder if this could have been the so-called song which Wright, Allen and others have described. It certainly might have been fairly well expressed by Allen's suggested rendering wissipawiddlee only this was broken up into rather widely disconnected syllables thus: -

wis - ai - pa - wid - dlee, or sometimes wis - wissi - pa - widdlee.

It did not impress me as being especially musical. When I first heard it I mistook it for the loquacious soliloquy in which the Black-capped Chickadee indulges occasionally at every season and which is certainly not a song. This it resembled very closely. Perhaps, after all, it was not the "song" which the other observers just alluded to have reported but at all events it was new to my experience as far as Parus hudsonicus is concerned. The bird observed this morning gave it five or six times in all.

Song (?)  
Parus hudsonicus

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(No 4)

In addition to their calls both birds and squirrels made other and slighter sounds caused by their movements among the branches and distinctly audible at considerable distances in the still air. Of these the light crackling made by the Canada Nuthatch as they pried apart the scales of the Balsam cones to get at the seeds was especially frequent and noticeable. I watched them expertly at this and saw them hide the seeds—never more than one in the same place—under scales of loose bark or in crevices in maple stems as is their interesting habit—practised also, of course, by the White-bellied Nuthatch, by our Black capped Chickadee and by Blue and Canada jays.

In woods where a number of poplars had been cut the snow about the prostrate tops of these trees was marked by the foot prints of Throated Geese which had evidently been feasting on the poplar buds. Rabbit tracks were seen every where but not in unusual profusion.



Bethel, Maine

1912.

January 4 Another brilliantly clear and very delightful winter day somewhat colder than yesterday, equally windless through the entire forenoon but with a chill easterly breeze blowing after 4 P.M.

Donning our snow-shoes not long after breakfast Dr. Selvig and I spent the most of the morning in the Glen Woods following the old trails made years ago. Whereas yesterday we kept chiefly to a path leading more to the eastward and cut during the past month to gain access to some woods which the doctor has recently bought and which lie in that direction. As last night was calm and clear with a full moon shining brightly we expected to find that many nocturnal mammals had been abroad but the signs of their recent wanderings were far more numerous and widespread than we had anticipated. There was indeed seen a Squirrel yard of snow throughout the woods we traversed which was not marked with the footprints of Rabbits and in many places they had

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1912.

January 4  
(No 2)

made hard-tracked paths running almost perfectly straight for considerable distances when there were no obstructing rocks or windfalls to divert them. The finely-braided trails of mice were also very numerous. A Fox had, covered almost every part of the woods, trotting ceaselessly. The number of Red Squirrels present here this season evidently far exceeds anything that I have ever ~~heard~~ in previous years. We heard them everywhere to-day and the snow bore the imprints of countless foot-marks. There were more birds, too, than I have ever found before in winter. In addition to the Chickadees, Nuthatches & Redpolls, whose voices greeted us every few minutes, whenever we went, we saw a solitary Blue Jay and heard a Golden Crested Kinglet and a Pine Grosbeak. I am somewhat at a loss to account for this unusual abundance of Squirrels and of winter birds. The visible food supply fails to explain it for the evergreens have comparatively few cones and the gray birches not many seeds although the Cotton Birch is rather heavily fruited.



Bethel, Maine

1912.

January 4  
(no 3)

On reading over what has just been written I perceive that it ~~entirely~~ fails to do full justice to its subject.

For during both forenoons the charm of these Bethel woods was in certain ways greater than I have ever known it to be before. Ordinarily they impress one as somewhat triste or even desolate in midwinter but on the occasions here referred to they seemed bright and cheery as well as exceedingly beautiful.

There was just enough snow both on the trees and under them to bring out to the best advantage the rich angular foliage of the spruces, balsams, firs & hemlocks and the trunks of the birches and maples. The sunlight appeared as clear and strong as in April and the breathless silence, due to entire absence of wind, was most restful as well as impressive. It might perhaps have been oppressive, also, but for the birds whose sweet voices, coming every now and then from far and near, served just sufficiently to relieve its tension and to add a note of gladness to the infinite calm and serenity of the forest depths.

Bethel, Maine

1912.

January 4  
(No 3)

What I have thus far written fails, I fear, to do  
full justice to its subject. For never before in my experience  
with these northland woods ~~intended~~ <sup>then</sup> have I known ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> be so very  
attractive. There was just enough snow both on the trees  
and under them to bring out most effectively the rich,  
dark green of the balsams and spruces, the lighter green of the  
firs, the olive green of the arbor vitae, the white stems of  
the birches and the grayish trunks of the maples. The sunlight  
seemed all pervasion and well-nigh as clear and strong as in  
April. The breathless stillness, due to entire absence of wind,  
was delightfully restful as well as <sup>impressive</sup>. It might perhaps have  
been somewhat oppressive, also, but for the birds whose sweet  
voices, coming every now and then from far and near,  
served just sufficiently to relieve its tension on the senses  
and to add a grateful note of gladness to the infinite  
calm and serenity of the forest depths.



Bowcord, Mass.

1912.

March 30

Brilliantly clear with light northerly wind. Cool.

Gilbert and I moved to Concord to-day, he coming up in the early morning, I at 2.08 P.M.

The river is about at its narrow April level the meadows being about 3 feet under water, the roadway around the south side of Ball's Hill perhaps a foot above the flood. The snow & ice are wholly gone save in deep, fine shaded hollows. The roads are settled & dry, the fields thickly & evenly with much frost yet to come out. Very little green grass except on the sunniest slopes where the winds do not strike.

Red-wings and Song Sparrows singing fast & warm along the river at Concord. Caught a glimpse of a flying Johnstons & heard his songs. Gray Herons fishing in the

cause hunting Muskrat rats. Heard no shots. Saw a Muskrat which he failed to see. It was swimming near shore in the Barrett Meadows. No King or Hylas. Phoebe in full song at Ball's Hill. Fox does seem enter that this morning.

Concord, Mass.

1912.

March 31.

Clear with strong S. W. wind. Early morning cool, thin ice on shallow pools, fields snow white with hoar frost. Warm at noon and through afternoon and evening.

At sunrise heard Song Sparrows, Red-wings, our Phoebe and a Pheasant, in song.

As we were at breakfast a White-bellied Swallow flew just across our view. Half an hour later Gabriel saw 2 Swallows alight on a box in Benson's pasture. A Bluebird attacked and drove them off.

Our Phoebe was joined by his mate to-day. I saw the pair enter the shed together at 9 a.m. At 2 P.M. saw 3 Phoebes together behind Bots' Hill. Two were singing. Heard a female Phoebe singing at the Farm.

An immense flock of Cross Blackbirds passed over the orchard at the Farm high in air at 5 P.M. during N.E. and evidently migrating. There must have been at least 100 in all. They were strong and in a long file (300 yds in length) with clusters here & there. As is their usual habit when on migration they all moved on a level plane, with steady, ceaseless wing beats, not once reaching to the undulating flight with intermittent flapping which one sees as often after they settle down to land. I should estimate the height as at least they were flying at about 100 yards.

Started six Partridge. Two of them were flushed from the back-hunt path behind our barn at 4 P.M. They rose in the open 20 yards from my barrels. Gabriel had just a covey of 8 Ring-neck Pheasants there only half an hour before.



Boucard, Miss.

1912.

March 31

(No 2)

Saw only a few Fox Sparrows & Juncos. Am told they were very abundant in Concord during the snow storm of Jan 24<sup>th</sup>. The bulk of the flight was probably passing here then and for a day or two later.

Only a few Robins seem to have come as yet.

I noted but three to-day. One was in the clump at Benson's singing divinely as I passed about 6 P.M. I could hear him all the way down to the shed at Pine Park. Also I heard at the same time a Hyla & two Wood Thrushes. There were a few others peeping or calling rather doubtfully at the time.

Passing Benson's Corral I saw four Black Ducks in the water on the meadows. Watched them for five minutes.

They were in pairs about 30 yards apart. When I showed myself fully they flew on over, although 300 yards off, & were followed by a third pair that rose from flooded bushes. Two of the females quacked most loudly.

Cansard, Mass.

1912  
April 1

Forenoon brilliantly clear with light north wind.  
Clouds gathering & chill easterly wind rising, in afternoon.

First Kingfisher and Marsh Wren, later flying  
over river opposite Ball's Hill.

Two flocks of Golden-eyes, one of eight, the  
other of five, were flying back and forth past the  
hill at intervals through the day, occasionally  
alighting well over in the flooded meadows about  
opposite Dutton's Hill. I found the flock of eight  
there early in the forenoon and sailed up to within  
about 300 yards of them. There were 4 old ducks &  
4 females. The ducks looked brown white at a distance,  
they and the drakes intermingled in varying order as  
they swam about, occasionally diving for food. When  
the land flocked & I took to paddling the birds seemed  
to notice me for the first time & at once flew. Whenever  
I saw either flock in the air I heard the musical  
sounds of their songs, sometimes almost half a mile away.

Two flocks  
of  
Harelda



Concord, Mass.

1912.

April 3

When I awoke this morning soon after day break it was sunny thick and fast and the ground was white yet a Phoebe was singing loud and joyously near the cabin. I heard no other birds at that time but later in the morning the 7<sup>o</sup> of Sparrows began and filled the air with their delightful music during the remainder of the day. At breakfast time as I sat down, at supper time there was fifteen - feeding on bread thrown out for them.

There were three Phoebes together at the shed early in the afternoon. Two were incessantly quacking and singing and chasing the third, a silent bird no doubt a female.

Had a chat with George Holden as he was passing in his hunting canoe. He says Moustcats are very scarce. He has shot 23 this spring, getting two ones day

Concord, Mass.

1912.

April 4

Brilliantly clear with high N. W. wind. Ther. 20° and ground hard frozen at day break. Very cool all day.

First Fish Hawk. He appeared flying low over the Fish Hawk river at 6.30 P. M., just as we were sitting down to supper. Heading straight for my back porch rising above the flooded meadow on the Bedford shore he alighted on it for an instant, no more than closing his great wings before spreading them again. Then he came towards us low over the water until, at a distance of scarce two yards, he wheeled directly in front of our windows and made off up river. His near approach to a great flock of 70+ Sparrows feeding in the holt in front of the cabin, sent them scattering off in every direction. One flew against the windows in its flight and was so stunned that it sat for many minutes in our little laundry basket, palpitating visibly.



Concord, Mass.

1912.

April 4  
(No 2)

The Fox Sparrows continue to increase about the cabin attracted by the hawthorn, rose and mulberry and on these out for them and by the shrubs which the hill affords from the city northerly winds. We counted 17 this morning and 34 about sunset this evening, all feeding together in the path and on the bank in front of the cabin, with a few juncos. They sang at frequent intervals all through the day in the pines on the hillside, sometimes singly, sometimes two or three at once, giving us a delightful accompaniment. Of the juncos joined in with their simple trills interspersed with the low liquid notes seldom heard at seasons other than these.

2 of  
Sparrows  
4  
Juncos

Apparently there were no Phoebe about the hill to day but I heard one singing in Pine Park. The Swallows seem to have wholly disappeared.

Phoebe

Swallows

Concord, Mass.

1912.  
April 6

Without question the winter has passed ten  
years ago featuring Massachusetts wild fowl after Jan. 1  
is resulting in a very considerable increase of these birds  
in Concord River. During the past week I have seen  
more Ducks since Batti this than I have noted them  
for years. This evening I saw a flock of 18 Golden eyes  
circle and alight close to another flock of 6 which  
were already in the water near the middle of Great  
meadow. George Holden reports shooting 15 Blue Ducks  
in Bedford Swamp on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Saml. O. Dexter  
tells me that some Concord boys who camped for a  
few days at Fainstone Bay about a week ago have  
assured him that the cove frequented by "hundreds  
of Ducks of several different kinds" during their stay.  
No doubt this statement was more or less in the nature  
of exaggeration but probably there were really very many birds.

Massachusetts  
Concord  
of Ducks  
in Concord  
River



Cowdard, Mass.

1912.

April 15

Forenoon cloudy and foggy; afternoon sunny but heavy.  
Dead calm all day. Air moist and warm.

This has been a great bird day. From early morning to late evening the still air has been almost crackling with the delightful music of Robins, Red-wings, Song Sparrows, Phoebe etc. From across the river came the song of a Fox Sparrow, a Meadow Lark, two Yellow-rumps, a Green Finch & the coming of a Dove. Hylas he fell on towards sunset & Garden Larks talking at 9 P.M.

At 2 P.M. Gilbert & I were standing in front of the  
cabin when we heard the call of a Killdeer Plover in  
the distance towards the north-east. Repeated every  
second or two it came nearer & nearer until at  
length the bird appeared over the eastern end of the  
hill. Just after passing it he turned slightly and  
headed nearly eastward out over the middle of  
Great Meadow, keeping straight on until he was lost  
in the distance. He was flying about 100 yards above  
the flooded meadows & river & he kept calling as long

Killdeer  
Plover

1912.  
April 15  
(Mon)

as he was within hearing and after he had passed beyond our sight. He flew straight & swift, and looked not unlike a Dove. The nearest he came to us was about 150 yards. He gave only the usual klee-dee (or klee-hee I should render it) call.

An immense flock of Blackbirds settled in the top of the big dead oak across the river & remained there about an hour. I counted 150.

Big flock  
of  
Red-wings  
against B.  
intermingled

Most of them appeared to be Red-wings but there were at least a few Great Blackbirds in the flock for I heard their husky voices mingling with the wild, clear music of the Red-wings who were indulging incessantly in the delightful chorus singing peculiar to this season.



Concord, Mass.

1912.

April 16

Sunny and oppressively warm with fresh southerly winds.

Procession of heavy thunder showers. 5-9 P. M.

At 2 P. M. I saw two Great Blue Herons flying over the farm towards the north-east at an elevation of fully a mile, one following closely in the wake of the other highly.  
Great Blue  
Herons  
migrating  
at immense

For the most part they flapped their wings steadily and ceaselessly but twice I saw one of them sail for the distance of a few rods on set wings. I cannot remember ever before seeing Herons of any kind flying at so great a height.

As I was passing through Birch Field at 4.20 P. M. I heard the distant hoark of a Goose given twice. A moment later the flock of 36 Canada Geese appeared so very high in air that they looked no larger than Bluebirds. Heading due north over Green Field they were soon out of sight nor did I again hear them call. They were flying in the usual V formation. They must have been at least a mile above the earth. Rarely have I witnessed anything of the kind so impressive.  
Canada  
Geese  
migrating  
at great  
height

Concord, Mass.

1912.

May 5

Forenoon sunny but hazy with light S. W. wind. Afternoon cloudy. Feeding  
Us Mr. & Mrs. William Stone and I were paddling up <sup>Roberts, of</sup>  
the Belton

river about 10 a.m. we saw a small, dull-colored Belton, evidently  
a female, sneaking along the margin of the water at "Hunt's Pond"  
(a small marsh bordered Cagone extending back from the river). At first  
the bird seemed to be trying to elude our observation but soon  
she ceased to show any fear of us and gave all her attention  
to a systematic quest for food. Paddling slowly or merely  
drifting in the current when the light wind served we kept within  
thirty yards of her for fully half an hour using our glasses freely.  
During this time she covered a distance of sixty or seventy yards  
waddling very slowly along the grassy shore in a crouching attitude  
with head and neck drawn in. Four times she stopped, extended  
her neck to its full length about on a level with her breast  
with bill pointing somewhat downwards, remained fixed  
& stationary in this attitude for several seconds and then



1912  
May 5  
(No 2.)

thrust her bill down into the shallow water with a quick, decided movement, yet not much swifter than that of a henpecked fowl picking up a kernel of corn. On each occasion she brought up some small object which obviously was neither a fish nor a frog and which we thought must be the cause of down water insect, perhaps a dragon fly or a Caddis worm. Shaking it over or twice and holding it in her bill only a second or two she swallowed it easily and with much apparent gratification as if it were a peculiarly palatable morsel. Then she would resume her slow, measured stalk around the edge of the lagoon.

At length a male Bittern appeared on wing, alighted near her and jumped twice. Soon after this she appeared from behind a mass of dead grass & other rubbish bearing in the tip of her bill a Horn Pout about five inches in length. Just how or where she captured it we failed, unfortunately, to observe but we had a rare opportunity of seeing exactly how she

Bittern  
feeding on  
small prey

1912.

May 5

(No 3)

she finally dealt with it. After carrying it a distance of perhaps twenty yards over water or very boggy ground she came to a stretch of firm dry turf and stopped there. Placing it on the ground she ~~stomped~~ downed at it with her bill dozens of times not exactly or even vigorously, but in a curiously cool and deliberate way, making only one or two thrusts each minute and pausing after them as if to waste the effort. Probably this was done for the purpose of killing the Poit but as far as we could see it did not even show any signs of life. After a few minutes spent in this way the Bittern began to lift the fish well above the ground and to shake it violently always holding it by the head. We now saw that its whole throat was bloody and somewhat lacerated. After one or two shakes the Bittern would stab it again & again as it lay on the ground, always, however, deliberately and in what

Bittern  
dealing  
with small  
Horned Poit



1912

May 5  
(no 4)

Seemed a rather nervous, fidgety way. This, with many brief periods of inaction on the part of the bird, continued for fully twenty minutes. All the while we in our own cases, with eyes glued steadily, kept the bird under constant observation. Mr. Starn was within ten yards of her; Mrs. Starn and I within twenty yards. At length the Bittern straightened up & holding the Port in her bill by the head attempted to swallow it. Failing to do so she shook and fluffed it some more and then tried again. This was repeated about five times before the final gulp was made and the fish disappeared down the bird's throat, swelling it very conspicuously for an instant.

The general behavior and motions of the Bittern while dealing with the Port before eating it reminded me forcibly of those of a Crow pecking at a piece of meat. We all thought it strange that she spent so much time in this way and concluded that she must have done it chiefly for the sake of removing the resistance of the head of the Port by loosening

Bittern &  
Horned Port

1912

May 5<sup>th</sup>  
(hr 5)

a freely, and perhaps also breaking down of the long  
structure in order to make it possible to swallow although

Bittern  
Horn Point

the first attack seemed, as I have said, to be for  
the purpose of holding the fish. Altogether the performance  
was entirely unlike what I should have expected  
of a Bittern. For I had always supposed that such  
fish as these birds capture would be swallowed almost  
instantly. Perhaps this is the case with many of  
them. But a Plover's head is so broad and long that  
it was evident from the preliminary twitches and movements.

After the Bittern had thus disposed of her prey  
she stood still and seemed indisposed to further  
action of any kind so we packed off and  
left her to digest her hearty meal.



Bowen, Mass.

1912.

May 10

As I was strolling through our berry pasture on the farm and near the pond about 2 P.M. I heard a shrill hoarse-like

Black Snake  
&  
Deer Mouse

zee-ing which at once suggested that of a Rattle Snake & indeed was almost exactly like and frequently stalling in its shrill, incisive quality. A second time I caught sight of the tail of a Black Snake vibrating rapidly among dry leaves & wood stems at the edge of a thicket of bushes within two yards of me.

Presently I made out the entire snake, a good-sized one perhaps 4' in length. His body was stretched out, his head towards me. In his jaws he held the head of a full grown Deer Mouse still alive & kicking convulsively with all four legs. After I had stood still for a half minute the Snake stopped vibrating his tail and proceeded to swallow the Mouse. At each successive gulp it stopped further & further in and at the end of the fifth or sixth was lost to sight, the total time it took the Snake to accomplish this being less than a minute. Soon after this the Snake yawned twice &

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May 60

(No 2)

then darted out his forked tongue. When I moved he resumed his tail motion & "rattling". At my second step forward he raised his head a foot or more above the ground and began gliding smoothly straight towards me. When I stepped back he stopped and with head still elevated fixed me with his glittering, beseeching eyes. Altogether his behavior was so impressively threatening that I was rather glad to leave him as I did not care to kill him and felt reasonably sure that I should have had to do so in self defense had I provoked him further. I wonder how he caught the mouse. He could not have had it long when I first saw him. He then had only its head in his mouth and was holding a "bottom side" up with its white under parts showing & its pinkish feet moving convulsively & frantically. My first intention was, of course, to kill him & secure the mouse.



Concord, Mass.

1912.

May 17

Thly sunny, partly cloudy with occasional light showers.  
Warm with strong south west to west winds. Heavy north-easterly  
storm yesterday followed by calm, warm, rainy & intensely dark night.

Heavy flight  
of migrants  
arriving during  
dark, rainy  
night.

Despite the rain and darkness last night immense numbers of  
migrants arrived before daybreak and flooded the Concord country  
this morning. I found them swarming about Bass Hill & the Farm  
and S. O. Dexter had the same experience in and near the  
belly of Concord. As the early morning hours were calm &  
warm with the sun shining dimly through thin mist the birds  
scattered rather widely and sang freely, as is their usual  
custom at this season under such conditions. Hence there were  
not anywhere very many of them assembled in one cluster of  
trees or thickets, however the flight was evidently a very  
general and considerable one indeed quite the heaviest that

has occurred thus far this month. Species noted for first  
time were Swainson's Thrush, Alder's Thrush, Prothonotary Warbler,  
Blackpoll W., Black-throated Blue Warbler, Lincoln's Finch, Hooded Plover,  
Herringbird, Olive-backed Gnatcatcher.

Concord, Mass.

1912.

May 17  
(no 2)

It is my custom when sleeping in the cabin to open a little window by the side of my bed when I first awake to enjoy the early morning singing without the trouble of rising at an inconvenient hour. When I did so at 5.30 this morning my ears were at once greeted by an unfamiliar song very loud and incisive and evidently coming from near at hand. Scarcely more than half awake I listened to it for ten minutes or more without getting any clue as to the identity of its author. It seemed most like the song of a Swamp Sparrow but was louder and the notes were fewer and less run together. At length I arose, dressed hurriedly and then looked out towards the river through the partly opened door of the cabin. Almost at once a flash of bright yellow caught my eye. The next moment a 3 Prothonotary Warbler hopped out on a leafless branch over the water directly in front of the cabin & sang and sang incessantly within ten yards of me. Shortly after this he flew

Prothonotary  
Warbler  
on  
Ralls (1892)



1912.

May 17  
(he 3)

Posthumous  
~~Prothon~~

to a bird stub and closer, inspected several crannies and then  
discarded dark spots that looked like holes, as if he were in search  
of a nesting place. Gilbert came out and disturbed him a little  
later when he flew up the hillside and flitted about in the tops  
of some oaks singing a few times. He followed me but lost him  
on the crest of the hill. Fifteen minutes after this I heard his  
loud song coming from the flooded thicket of maples, willows  
& button bushes across the river opposite Back Gate. I went down  
in a canoe after breakfast (about 7.30) and found him  
still in loud song and flitting about among the bushes. Presently  
a Wilson's Black Cap alighted and chased him about when he  
flew to the tops of large maples a little further up the river.  
Then I saw him creeping about and clinging to thin twigs  
just above the water. Dexter & I looked for him there &  
elsewhere along the river but in vain from 1 to 2 P.M.  
I tried again just before sundown but without avail.

1912.

May 17  
(No 4)

This Prothonotary had, as I have said, a peculiar song with little or nothing of the Song Sparrow quality, ordinarily so obvious in the song of this species. Until I shot him I did not so much as suspect his identity. Besides the song I heard several times a chirp, sharp & persistent, very like that of a Water Thrush. He was a handsome bird but not in fully high plumage the yellow of his head and breast being less rich and brighter than in most males at this season. He seemed restless and also shy. Indeed I did not ever get very near him except when I first popped out at him from my cabin door and then, of course, I was so well concealed that he failed to notice me. Not since 1886 have I seen a Prothonotary in Massachusetts although I have repeatedly looked for the species along this river at the season of migration.

Prothonotary  
Warbler  
on  
Song Sparrow

1912.

May 17  
(has)

While in the canoe this morning waiting on Pictou Bay, Pied-billed Grebes(?!)  
I heard what I took at first to be a Green Heron. The  
sound seemed then to come from the flooded forest. But  
when I paddled across this it came obviously from far  
up Green Heron. Although I paddled towards it until  
I could go no farther it was still in the distance  
apparently near "Shan Oak Island." It was sounded  
very much like our guide, like the ordinary, prolonged  
note of the Pied-billed Grebe (that coo-coo-coo in  
notes) Evidently two birds were making it, one evidently  
answering the other often on intervals. I finally let them  
down (still with a slight lesson of doubt) as Grebes.  
Their voices were so loud that I almost feared them a mile  
away on the water. The terminal notes I would give myself.  
Saw two Great Sandpipers & one Herring Gull flying  
up the marshes.



1912.

May 17

(1916)

About six o'clock this morning I found a pair of  
Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. Beginning their work in the fork of  
a young branch on the east end of Bald's Hill. They flitted  
about together making almost incessantly a soft, low,  
agitated, tender calling to one another. The ♀ kept trying  
to break off dead twigs from branches. When after many  
fruitless attempts she got one she flew with it to the fork.  
The ♂ eagerly presented her and settling down in the  
fork received from her the twig and set it in place  
among the first others (less than half a dozen) which  
had been brought when my observations began. The ♀  
immediately gave up the twig when the ♂ reached his  
bill towards her for it. I heard the ♂ sing only  
a few times during the entire morning. The low  
soft low call heard by both sexes might be  
written the

Rose-breasted

Grosbeaks

at work

on nest

The ♂ flies

on twigs,

and gets

them for

him.

Concord, Mass.

1912.

May 24

Forenoon clear & warm with little or no wind, birds singing freely up to about noon. Afternoon cool with strong east wind. Heavy thunder showers at evening & some light drizzle about 12.15. Night very cool; almost frosty.

Second heavy flight of Robbers for ten minutes here to-day, mostly over birds, Redstarts, and Black-poll. A Bay-breeze in Ball's H. L. and a White-crowned Sparrow at Town the latter in a blossoming apple tree busily pecking the blossoms with his pink bill - a fair, large, common bird in fruit plumage. Three Cedar birds also among apple blossoms & also several Robbers Black-poll (3♂♂ 2♀♀), a Magnolia W., House W. and a Maryland Yellow-Throat, all in the orchard about the flower garden at the rear of our house.

In the house, fluttering at the window of the east chamber, I found a Chiming Swift. When I released it outside it flew straight off southwest until lost to sight in distance.

Heavy  
flight of  
North  
Robbers  
Two Bay-breeze  
White-crowned S.  
3 Cedarbirds

Chiming  
Swift in  
Chamber of  
East Chamber.

Concord, Mass.

1912.  
May 21  
(Sat.)

Shortly before noon to day I was standing under some pines  
at the north-east end of the Swamp at the base of Ball's Hill  
watching some Robbers flitting about in the Swamp. Among  
them was the Bay Breasted already well bred, I heard from  
these given notices for several minutes with my glass glued  
to my eyes and had just taken it down for an instant when  
a hen Partridge flushed from the edge of the Swamp about  
30 feet from where I stood rising heavily with a noisy fluttering  
and making repeatedly, as she flew slowly off, the whining sound  
given by mature birds of this species when dislocated with their  
noisy hatched broods. Advancing a few steps I saw almost  
immediately her nest which contained 11 unincubated eggs. It

Partridge  
nest, 11 eggs.

Hen Partridge  
whines as  
wing from  
nest with  
egg.

was near the foot of a ~~large~~ pine large white pine in the very

middle of a tangle of ball briar. Never before have I known  
a Partridge rookery except when ~~the~~ had young. A Goshawk has been  
driving for weeks past about 200 yds. from this nest on the steep  
slope of Ball's Hill. There was a nest but gone on the Ball's Hill side  
of the Swamp & was there within 30 yds. of nest when in 1910.



Concord, Mass.

1912

April 1-

July 1

Turdus fuscescens. - In normal numbers. Two ♂♂ singing in the Swamp behind Ball's Hill, one in Davis Hill Swamp, two in Pine Point Swamp, two opposite the cabins near Stone Boat house, one near Birch-Tield just before Bassett Spring. There was one in the trees at the Farm on May 23 & 25 & 31<sup>st</sup>, and another in the Berry Pasture on the 25<sup>th</sup>. I heard the first Veery sing this year on May 16<sup>th</sup> just ten days after the arrival of the first bird.

Turdus a. bicinctus. At 1 P.M. on May 21 I heard a Gray-chested Thrush sing several times on the south slope of Ball's Hill. It was in nearly full voice. The next day I saw in the same place a typical small bicinctus which I think must have been the same bird. No other Gray-chests noted by me this spring.

Turdus swainsoni. - Several noted between May 17 & 25. One was singing freely at 9 A.M. on the 23<sup>rd</sup> in place there was one from here.

Turdus fallax. - Very scarce this spring owing, no doubt, to heavy loss in the South East winter. The only birds certainly a northward migrant was one seen on April 20 at Ball's Hill. In Birch-Tield one was seen by Gilbert on May 2 and two on the 11<sup>th</sup>. On June 1, 5 & 21 I heard a male or fresh song in oak woods on the western edge of Birch-Tield.

Mercula migratoria. - Robins, also, were very scarce. At the Farm we had only two breeding pairs. There was a pair nesting at Ball's Hill & two pairs in Perkins orchard, W. Belknap's. Not over 10% of usual number everywhere in our neighborhood. No chorus singing heard this year.

Concord, Mass.

1912

April 1 to  
July 1

Sialis Sialis. - Judging by conditions here the Blackbirds must have suffered as heavy loss in the South East corner as they did in the corner of 1894-5. The only Sighting here I know of in our neighborhood was 3 or 4 young in a box in Benson's garden, besides those I saw on a hill & on June 3 near Great Meadow & an old bird with one young on June 23 near Red Bridge. Scattered birds were heard cawing in the air on other occasions, in other places. Taylor saw only one bird during a walk in May from Concord to Hingham. For the first time in my experience there were no nests at any place in the Peabody place.

Galaxoptes carolinensis. - In usual numbers. One pair nesting behind house at Farm, another in Berry Pasture, a third near Mrs. Hallow's house, a fourth in flooded thickets opposite Boss' Hill.

Concord, Mass.

1912

April 1 to  
July 1.

Haerophycus rufus. Exceedingly scarce after the migration passed. During its continuance (May 1-14) I heard or saw a few birds at Bossi Hill. Afterwards I located but one which sang freely from May 12 to June 25 in Mr. How's pasture at the base of Hildens Hill.

Sitta carolinensis. - On March 31<sup>st</sup> and again on April 17 I saw a pair of Nuthatches in the elms that shade our farm house. On April 28 I noted a ♂ at Benson's and on June 23 heard the call of a bird at Dr. Swenson's place. Quite evidently there was no nest at or very near our farm this year. Why they should have ceased to breed there after autumnal residence for many seasons I cannot imagine.

Certhia americana. No couples noted this spring or in August in Concord or elsewhere for that matter. I fear they must have suffered severely in the South East winter with the Bluebirds, Robins etc.



Concord, Mass.

1912.

April 1 to  
July 1.

Troglodytes aëdon. On May 1 I found a thrush bird singing at the Farm and saw it enter a box on a pole in the garden at the rear of our house. After this it was seen or heard there daily. On May 23 I saw a pair together on a box on a pole in the little vineyard in front of our house. At the time I supposed the ♂ to be the same as the only first noted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> but on the 25<sup>th</sup> I found that there were two pairs, each building in one of these boxes and keeping very strictly to a limited area about it. During May the ♂ in front of the house was seldom heard but the one in the garden sang freely at all hours. From June 24 to 30 both sang incessantly from early morning to just sunset flashing their blue with their delightful, joyous music. Often one of them would sing 14 or 15 times a minute, keeping it up for half an hour or more. This second song period was decidedly more pronounced than the first with both birds. I think its singing note has been

1912.

April to  
July 1

(*Geothlypis trichas*) contemporaneous with the laying of a second clutch of eggs just on June 24 the ♀ in front of the house behaved very suspiciously when I approached her box during, as if she had young in it. About this same date her mate began haunting our road shed and behaving very oddly there. During the following week he spent most of his time in it bringing on the roof and wood pile and exploring every crack & corner of the latter.

Within the shed a Phoebe had hatched her brood and taken it away just before this. The Hen now took, and for three days held, possession of her nest within which he created a bedding down of dead twigs. Finally the Phoebe returned and threw out all the twigs which the Hen replaced as soon as the Phoebe was gone. This has gone on continuously now for three days (June 26-29). The ♂ Phoebe haunts & sings near the shed only in the early morning. The ♂ Hen is there all day. I have seen the ♀ Hen of this pair only once or twice her mate.

Hen takes possession of Phoebe's nest in shed & fills it with sticks

Concord, Mass.

1912.

April 1 to  
July 1

Listothorus palustris et stellaris. None observed by me. Nor has Dexter been able to find any except at Wayland and there he noted but one bird, a ♂ palustris singing near the Bridge Lake in June.  
Anthus ludovicianus. On May 5 I saw four Titlarks flying over the river near Horse Pond. They uttered the usual flight call (pip-it, pip-it).

Helminthophila chrysoptera. - Golden wings have ceased to breed anywhere at or near the Farm. Nor did I note any this year during migration. Two were seen between Fairbloom and Horse Pond by W. Tuxton, late in May. On that same day he saw six the same locality.

Helminthophila lunata - a few typical ♂, singing. Neither this bird nor the Golden wings could be found anywhere although the place was repeatedly visited.

H. rubicapilla. After migration was over I noted specimens only

twice - once from Boston I heard a ♂ singing near Bylons Pond and on June 29, while on my (one only) on the Bay Point at 7 A.M.



Concord, Mass.

1912.

April to  
July 1

Dendroica aestiva. For the first time in years no Yellowthroats nested in the garden at the Farm. I heard a ♂ singing in Lawrence's garden on June 3 and on other the road across Rogers Brook near Peterson's on the 26<sup>th</sup>. The species was breeding rather more numerous than usual along the river, however. Two ♂♂ sang in the fringe of trees opposite Paul's Island, one across the river from Burrows' Knoll, several between Hunt's Pond & F. Carter's Pond.

Dendroica pennsylvanica. Chestnut-sided Warblers have been diminishing hereabouts in numbers for several years. In the Bow's Hill region a ♂ singing in the swamp behind the hill is the only one I know of that has remained through June. At the Farm two ♂♂ have sung in the Big Pasture & a third on the hillside west of our house. These four (in all) are the only ones that have been under my observation during the breeding season.

Concord, Mass.

1912

April to  
July 1.

Dendroica Blackburnia. - On June 3 I heard four ♂♂ singing, one near Purple Rock, one in Prescott's fields, one on Davis Hill, one on Pine Ridge. On the 29 I heard two near Purple Rock. Thus at least five must have perished in my woods this year, if not through the breeding season.

Sylvania Canadensis. Noted only once during breeding season - on June 24 when I heard one singing in swamp behind Ball's Hill.

Staphylis triviridis. A pair of Redstarts bred in the birch maples near the cabin at Ball's Hill, the only ones I have ever seen for several years. I heard the ♂ singing as late as May 31.

On June 21 the ♀ was chirping incessantly because of the near presence of a pair of Jays. At the same time we had at least two pairs of ♀♂s thrush there, in the grove behind the barn & in the apple orchard in front of it.

Vireo Solitarius. Through May & June I heard birds singing on Ball's Hill, Pine Ridge, Davis Hill, in Prescott's fields & in Purple Rock woods. In locality last named there were usually 2 ♂♂ in full song, often within a few rods of one another.

Concord, Mass.

1912.

April 1 &

July 1.

Vireo flavifrons. One bird at the Farm arrived May 17 & sang then in the big elms as usual up to June 5<sup>th</sup> although there was heavy sprigging on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. After the 5<sup>th</sup>, however, the birds appeared there only occasionally. There was certainly no bird heard there this year. In all I noted not more than 3 or 4 V. flavifrons this season.

Amphisp. cedrorum. A few Cedar Birds must still breed in Concord as I saw or heard them occasionally through June at the Farm & along the river.

Progne subis. Heard twice near Ball's Hill - on May 5 & June 1. I learn that there has been a fair-sized breeding colony in the boxes on the House place & that Mr. Parker has established a new colony of 20 or 40 pairs on his place on Rockbrook Hill.

Hirundo lunifrons. Heavy flight of migrants feeding over river at Ball's Hill April 23 & 29. Only a few arrived to breed. We had the usual pair in our bungalow barn. Brood of young on bench over river June 30.

Tachycineta bicolor. Three breeding pairs at Farm, one in Bowdoin's pasture, one in meadow E. of Ball's Hill. Heavy old-bird flights of migrants hunting over April 23 & 29 & very many on 19, 25, 28 & 30.



Concord, Mass.

1912.

April 1 to

July 1.

Cotile riparia. - Fair-sized breeding colony in back on Bedford Street near

Catholic Cemetery, another one in back near Town Center (Wheeler's Sand Bank /

near on Doherty's Hill or near Petersons. Very few seen along river after migration.

Spirilla pusilla. Very scarce this season. Must have suffered heavily from

cold winter in South. I doubt if any bred on our land although I heard

one singing in or near our berry pasture May 3-25. One heard in Harris

pasture & another at base of Everett's house, Bigelow road, on June 3.

Melospiza melodia. Comparatively scarce during migration & later. Must

have suffered in South. Not over 20% of usual number around to breed.

At the Farm had none near house & only 2 were song in Berry Pasture

Pipilo erythrophthalmus. - This species also unusually scarce. Only one

bird noted during breeding season. He sang in Berry Pasture through June.

Hylocichla ludovicianae. Less numerous than usual. One pair at Farm, one

at Davis Hill. Later bird met in back E. end of hill but joyful bled it.

Passerina cyanea. These 23 singing through June at Farm, one  
near house, one in Berry Pasture, one in Birch Field.

Glenade, Mass.

1912

June 9

Clear & cool with brisk N. W. winds. Ther 62° at noon.

As I am working under the hemlocks at the rear of my studio I hear the same Black-throated Blue Warbler who was here two or three years ago. At least he has the same peculiar song. This I should render ti-ti-ti-ti tee-ee (or tee-ee). These notes are given quickly and only the final tee-ee has any suggestion (and this but slight) of the usual droning, heavy quality. Indeed the song as a whole is bright, lively and rather musical. Nevertheless it is somewhat suggestive of that of the Yellow Hummer of England, especially the terminal note which might well be rendered "chee".

The song just described ceased a few minutes ago and was immediately succeeded by the normal song of Catherhous coming from the same place and, I feel almost sure, from the same bird. This has been repeated a dozen times or more.

Now the ti-ti-ti-ti, chee is resumed & given knowingly again.\*

Dendroica  
Catherhous  
with peculiar  
song.

\* After this I heard clearly, up to June 16, the ti-ti-ti-ti, tee-ee song but never once again the normal song.

Glenade, Mass.

1912

June 9

(No 2)

There was little singing last evening or early this morning but now, at noon, as I am sitting under the hemlocks a perfect medley of bird voices comes sweetly to my ears from every direction. Near at hand are two Red-eyes, an Oven bird, the Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Green Warblers, a Tanager, a Black-chinned Noddy and a Humming bird (chirruping). Further off, in the pasture hemlocks, are Magnolia Warblers & an Indigo bird. The Wood Thrush are silent and I heard only a few notes from one last evening. The Robins sang well on evening & morning but there was only a few of them here this year; None I hear a Crested Flycatcher in the far distance and a Redstart and a Black & White Creeper.



Gloucester, Mass

1912.

June 16

There are rather more Robins here than in most places that I visited this year but not so many as usual. The greatest number seen at any one time when in the garden has been four & I doubt if more than two pairs are nesting about the "Fences" place. One remarkably handsome old male has been singing almost incessantly for ten days or more. I have been a little surprised to find that he often sings while on the ground. This morning I captured him at it for ten or fifteen minutes, as he was on the old-shaven lawn close to the house. He would give from one to three bars of the normal song and then make a short run before continuing his lay. Sometimes he would and upbeats on each note during one of these long intervals of silence. Except that it thus interrupted the song does not differ in any respect from that which he gives when in the tree. He is an exceptionally fine singer with strong, powerful

Robin sings  
on ground.

Conchester, Mass.

1912.  
July 6

Clear & intensely hot with light S. W. wind.

I went to Conchester by an afternoon train to-day to spend Sunday with John E. Thayer. He had just come down from our rooms, about 7 P.M., fully dressed for dinner when he called my attention to an animal moving on the lawn below the house & about 200 yards away. Through an opera glass we could see that it was a Squirrel about the size of a three quarters grown young Gray but apparently wholly black.

Black  
Squirrel

Thayer got out a small gauge (44) double barreled gun and two shells - which, unfortunately, were loaded with dust shot - and we started down the slope he leading with the gun and running most of the way. As we neared the Squirrel we saw that it was beyond question as black all over as any crow. When we were within fifty yards it ran up the trunk of a young elm. Advancing to within twenty yards Thayer fired and knocked the Squirrel off the trunk but on striking the

Launceston, Mass.

1912.

July 6  
(No 2)

Black  
Squirrel.

ground it started out over for a nearby Douglas fir and disappeared under some drooping branches, moving rather slowly as if badly wounded. Failing to find it beneath the fir we supposed that it must have gone up it and Thayer without a moment's hesitation started to follow it. At my suggestion, however, he first removed his dress suit and began the climb stripped to his shirt & drawers. The tree was densely branched and about 40 ft. in height. He went nearly to the top but could discover no trace of the Squirrel which must have kept on over the ground to one or another of the numerous evergreens at the base of the one just mentioned. Then at length he. Thayer descended he presented a ludicrous sight for his collar was reduced to pulp, his glossy shirt front streaked with filth, his drawers torn to shreds. His only concern,

however, seemed to be in respect to the loss of the Squirrel.

I wonder if there many men of his age, weight and constitution who, under such conditions, would have been similarly inspired by pure devilry or else & without any to undertake such exertion for such a purpose.



Cambridge, Mass.

1912

July 20

Clear & cool with light S. W. wind.

Visited the Charles River marshes this forenoon (9.30-11.30) in company with Walter Deane. We entered them behind the ~~Stillman~~ Infirmary and left them at the south east corner of Cambridge Cemetery. They are in an interesting stage of transition from salt (or brackish) marshes to fresh water meadows and park lands. A large area between Swin's Hill and the creek near it, as well as beyond this creek, has been filled with earth from the subway left in heaps as it was dumped from the carts. Elsewhere the surface of the marsh has not as yet been modified in any way by man. Its vegetation has changed a good deal, although but little might have been expected. Practically all the salt marsh grasses, sedges and other plants still present but many of them are less numerous than formerly and becoming more or less prostrate. Much of the "black grass" is dead

1912

July 20

(1912)

on dying and there is comparatively little Solidago serotina left. Hosts of plants and kinds of various kinds have evidently established themselves there since the dam was built and salt water there and. Among them I noticed purple fir wood in bloom, cat tail flags, Sagittaria and gilly berries, the last named numerous in flower and fruit on top of in height. The numerous, straight, narrow artificial ditches still present and contain shallow water issuing into mosquito larvae although schools of small fish haunched about their margins. Dragon flies of several kinds were flying over them. In the river we saw Potamogeton of three different species, one introduced from Europe. The weasels were everywhere to day

that we walked over them without getting so much as the tops of our shoes. The river was for the most part obnubled by the recent drought.

1912.

July 20  
(has 3)

The number and variety of the birds seen during this week improved was not a little. There is a full list of them

1. Yellow Warbler. Two in apple tree near Castle's farm
2. Savanna Sparrow. ♂ in full song; ♀ near him chirping answers.
3. Song Sparrow. 3 ♂♂ singing on edge of marsh.
4. House Sparrow. About a dozen along edge of marsh
5. Meadow Lark. Two or three in marsh, one in full song.
6. Red wing Blackbird. Flock of six ♀♀ & young in marsh.
7. Cow Blackbird. Flock of about twenty
8. Flicker. Two or three in marsh
9. Crow. Five or six in Cemetery oaks.
10. Kingbird. Family party of four, edge of marsh.
11. Chipping Swift. About a dozen over marsh.
12. Kingfisher. One flying over river.
13. Sparrow Hawk. Family party of four or five in oaks  
edge of marsh & flying over marsh. He saw one carrying what

Cootanib, Mon.

1912

July 20  
(1914)

appeared to be a long stalk of green grass or weed & another which was certainly a foul hard mass of dry hay, in its talons. These circumstances were soon dropped after the bird alighted. We thought they were packed up with grasshoppers - literally swimming all over the weed.

14. Ring-neck Pheasant. One heard to cross thence, apparently near the Cootanib ferry - still as populous & flourishing as of yore.

15. Spotted Sandpiper. At least a dozen heeded along the banks of the river.

16. Black Duck. A flock of 11 swimming in the river. We got within 100 yards of them. All looked fairly plump. Another saw a flock of similar size down on very grassy ground.



Concord, Mass.

1912.

July 20

The river is flowing just now through a wild-flower garden of exceeding beauty, extending on both sides from Ball's Hill all the way to Cobble Bridge and beyond and made up of broad belts of white water lilies backed by narrower ones of purple-flowered juncus, with button bushes covered with creamy white blossom forming the back ground. I sailed almost to the bridge in a canoe this afternoon and was thrilled by the wonderful display of color. There were plenty of Red-wings and Bobolinks wheeling in flocks over the marshes and clustering about the beds of wild rice but I saw few other birds except Swallows, <sup>most</sup> of which were House Swallows. The only birds heard singing were Red-wings, Song Sparrows and Swamp Sparrows.

The Vireo was wholly silent even after sunset. The two young Vireos in the nest by the path near the cabin which hatched a week ago to-morrow are half grown & partly feathered.

Cambridge, Mass.

1912

July 3

Three young Screech Owls, perched in a row on a branch of the catalpa overhanging the garden walk by the entrance, were seen and soon after they were seen on a branch of our garden tree. This morning they spent the day there in the dense shade of the big leaves. An old bird, presumably the father, joined them about 1 P.M. was gone at 3 P.M. and back again at 6 P.M. The last bird was seen at 6 P.M. and back again at 6 P.M. I heard the young in the garden last night and saw them this morning. I saw them in the twilight there this evening. It seems probable that they were hatched in the box in the jungle in which Flicker nested years ago and which Screech Owls have since occupied in common. They may, however, have come from a greater distance for they are strong of wing now although still in first plumage. They saw two young Owls on old oak in the jungle last summer when I was in England. They were there during the day, he says.

Young  
Screech Owls  
in  
the garden.

P. Abidgen, Cal.

1912.

July 4

One seen ~~from~~ near; several birds with this bird in  
the Catalpa this morning. They all spent the day there.

Family of  
Scrub Owl  
in  
Garden.

" 5

One seen ~~from~~ again in Catalpa but all four young in lilacs  
where, within two yards of the garden path and close to the  
ground, they sat close together through the day and  
were visited at close range by all the hawks of our yard  
and more than a dozen of our neighbors.

" 6

Old bird in Catalpa, 4 young picturesquely arranged on the  
edge of the lilac bush on edge of fence.

" 7

Old bird in Catalpa all day, 4 young in grape arbor  
together on top rail of trellis.

" 8

Entire Owl family reunited in Catalpa at 9.30 A.M. but two  
young were missing from the group by noon. At 2 P.M. I was

hurrying towards the Museum when one of the young flew up

from the edge of the little pond & back into the Catalpa, chased  
by House Sparrows & Marsh Wrens. The usual coping of the  
pond was just when the bird had been & I think the bird was talking  
there. A closing had been the way from the sky on the bird.

Franklin, Mass.

1912.

July 9

Saw the first Owl flying over the Catalpa at 8 A.M. Family of four Texas Hawks (also the red bird also seen and then all was going having surrounded during the interval (all the morning was clear & hot) & the other 4 or 5 eggs of the young were flying off the remainder of the day.

" 10

Old Owl passed the day together in Catalpa. At evening 7:40 they were seen and set over the water flying to & fro in the twilight for an hour, finally descending. The other place seen & then with them. I suppose I was I saw one or two, but, I am not sure. They alighted once up in the trees.

" 11

Old Owl in Catalpa all day, 4 eggs, a high water up to 10 A.M. One seen in the air at 10:30 A.M. & 1:30 P.M. Case in the day.

" 12

Old Owl in Catalpa, 3 young in air, though few. At 5 P.M. they had left the nest & could not be seen.



Cambridge, Mass.

1912

July 13

Mother bird in catalpa and 3 young together in vicinity of  
catalpa. One of the young birds  
a large black bird that overtops the other birds. This day, I saw.

" 14

Three young after day in grape arbor, under the leaves.

" 15

Four young in arbor through forenoon and in grape  
afternoon. I saw them and saw one on 15th.

" 16

Old bird in catalpa all day, 16th. I saw it  
on one of the young bird was sitting on the ground in the middle  
of a road, under the leaves, when the new bird came along  
for a short time. It was off with a lot of it and appeared  
in the air. It was then for up the wall in the arbor.  
Seven two minutes before it. They had gone along the  
wall without being a part of the bird. A few minutes  
later he found the other three young in the cherry tree by  
the tool house where they have not been seen before.

" 17

Old bird in catalpa through day. Four young in arbor at 8 a.m.  
but gone from there & not to be discovered elsewhere, after 1 P.M.  
At evening I saw one flying over the arbor.

1112.

July 18

One of two young birds found today in U.

Family of  
young birds  
in garden

calatope; the other there and this found there is in  
the very top of the tree, then in case of good color in  
the station. Then I had a good view of the old bird  
and saw that it is a bit more strongly and I find  
that, then, the coloring being dark, it is the same.  
Young, C. I can have been lately seen less or more of the  
young in the top of the tree and in the garden and back in  
the top of the tree. The young of the old bird is in the  
top, over the old bird. One could not be seen and a second.

" 19

Two young in top of the tree where the old bird was yesterday;  
found bird back on the back of the calatope.

" 20

Two young in top end of tree at 7 a.m., at 10 a.m.

found one high in the tree at 10 a.m. in calatope at the top.

" 22

Old bird with 3 young in top of the tree. Found one in the garden.

" 23

" " " " " " " " " " " "

Cambridge, Mass.

1902.

July 24

One young bird in top of cherry tree, in east garden, on  
//  
through a web of spider.

Family of  
Scrub Owls  
in  
the Garden.

" 25

Three young birds in top of cherry tree, in east garden  
fostered by Perry, found a worm in the fruit. The birds  
this day prefer to begin their meals at the bottom  
after the bird and continue before it.

" 26

Three young in grass above at 7.30 a.m.; in top of cherry  
tree, or garden; scattered about on the ground in both places,  
apparently waiting for prey, at 6.45 P.M. after the birds

" 27

All four young of pulchellus close together in paper bush in garden  
at 8 a.m. They now show well-developed "ears" but  
are still in their plumage. One looks strongly like a  
young. The old bird was seen then to-day.

" 28

Two young birds in catalpa, a third in top of cherry, in  
garden, with the old bird, waiting

1912.

July 30

The old bird was in top of cherry, the new bird of her young  
was in poplar, all day. We had the satisfaction of  
sighting at once, about 7.45 P.M., in the brick grove when they  
started to feed for with interesting notes and calls as,  
shifting from perch to perch very fast, were also  
the sound beneath absolutely, apparently in search of prey.

" 31

Old bird in top of cherry all day; her young on  
thump of apple tree as edge of forest, the other two were in.

Aug. 1

Old bird in top of cherry all day of poplar, 3 young,  
two down in cherry near bird house. At 7 P.M. I could  
find only one bird, a young one. Late in the afternoon  
Gilbert started on from the tree, inside which it was  
perched on a tall north.

" 2

Three young birds spent day in top of chestnut tree  
tree - a new station. We failed to find the other two birds.

" 3

Three young in top of cherry all day.



Cambridge, Mass.

1912

August 5

Only the old Owl seen to day. in light of being here.

Family of  
Great Owls  
at 3 a.m.

" 6

Three Owls spent day in clearing trees near of cabin.

the old red bird in one, two young in the other.

" 7

Three young Owls, widely scattered, in one in the light.

The third appeared about noon, in bright light, on the  
central rim of the little pond in garden of house. when it

sat erect and alert with eyes wide open, gazing in his

way and that, frequently bobbing its head up & down. When

we peered out at it through a window of the house

it noticed us at once and gazed at us for fully five

minutes with its face towards us over its back. Soon

after this a Robin darted down at it when it flew up

into the catalpa to be assailed there presently by an Irish

two Red-eyes & a Yellow Warbler, all excited & vociferous.

It probably visited the pond with the intention of

taking a bath. I saw bird-plumage often in the water. Perhaps the  
gold fish seen as an attraction but I have never seen taken & y-

Cambridge, Mass.

1912

August 8

The Oulets are showing an increasing tendency to desert  
and perhaps are beginning to desert our grounds. We could  
find but three to day. An old bird in the cherry tree top,  
one young in the leaves, another in the field.

Family of  
Savannah Oulets  
"The Garden"

" 9 Three young, one in cherry, two together in blue spruce  
in field. a new station here.

" 10 Percy & I looked long and carefully for the Oulets but  
found only one, a young bird perched in an cherry tree top  
where two young descended and walked down, with father just  
waiting.

" 12 Two young together in the bare poplar (not in the cherry tree)  
the day. We failed to find the old one but heard her calling.  
The normal waiting cry at 7.30 P.M.

" 13 Three young, Oulets again in the bare poplar. no new stations here.

" 14 Two young spent day together in blue spruce in field.

The smallest bird was on our favorite perch in the cherry tree.



Cambridge, Mass.

1912.

Aug. 19

Two young Owls in best bush, their red nest in top of  
cherry marked by 2 Owls & 5 or 6 Cross Blackbirds at 1 P.M.

Scrub Owls  
in  
Garden

At 7 P.M. I heard her cooing in the jungle.

" 20

Only one Owl found to-day - a young bird on a high bush  
in a catclaw tree in the jungle.

" 21

Three Owls, all young ones as thought, spent day perched high in  
a cherry tree. They were marked early in the forenoon by numerous  
note & excited birds among which 2 Blue Jays, a Robin, a young ♀  
Scarlet Tanager, 3 young Orioles, many House Sparrows and at least  
15 Cross Blackbirds, all these raising their voices in united  
and well-nigh deafening clamor which disturbed me not a  
bit as I sat writing in the morning.

" 22

Old Owl in cherry tree by tool house; one young in another  
cherry tree; one flying about Garden in evening twilight.

" 23

Old Owl in cherry tree by tool house; 2 young in best  
bush. Saw an Owl fly across Sparks Street at 7 P.M.



Cambridge, Mass.

1912

Aug. 24

Old Owl again in Cherry Tree by the house. Two young in bush. As

Screech Owls  
in  
Garden.

I was looking at letters about 8 a.m. They were disturbed by a whistle

flock of crabs of which I counted 12 & heard still others scolding.

Aug. 25

Mother bird in cherry tree by tree house. One young in leaving

Frank scolded by Orin & Japs. He others seen.

" 26

mother shot again in same cherry tree. One young in hanging bush,

another in blue species (in Jogh 1., both with almost perfect

under plumage which will eventually be gray.

" 27

Old Owl in Cherry tree by trail house, 3 young together in heavy bird.

" 28

" " " " " " " 3 young in cherry east of arbor.

" 29

" " " " " " " 2 young in bush one robin, 1 in cherry E. of A.

" 30

Two young Owls in cherry E. of arbor. Thought I took to be mother working at 7 P.M.

" 31

The old bird & 2 young seen in Garden.

Sept. 23

Pale red bird, very large, in lots. Seen by W. B.

24

" " " " " " " " Perry Hall

" 25-

11 4 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11

" 26

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

Concord, Mass.

1912.

Sept. 19

Night cloudy, calm and oppressively warm following a hot and humid day. Although I had seen very few birds about they were migrating in some numbers between 10 and 11 P.M. when I heard the calls of Woodpeckers or Thrushes very faintly as I sat reading in the cabin with door & windows open. One of the Thrush calls repeated several times within my hearing was evidently that of either a Gray-cheked or a Dickcissel Thrush being, indeed, essentially the call we hear by Gray in form on Mt. Washington but yet not quite the same & probably representing the night cry of the species. As compared with the day call it was shriller & more throaty. The other Thrush calls heard seemed to be those of Wilson's Thrush or at least indistinguishable from them. I noted two Wilson's Thrushes at the Farm on the afternoon of the 17<sup>th</sup> being one distinctly songing.

Night calls

of  
migrating  
Thrushes

Concord, Mass.

1912.

Sept. 19  
(No 2)

Just after I had gone to bed (at 11 P.M.) something began making a variety of low chattering murmuring & twittering sounds just outside my bedroom windows.

Mythimna  
herodias  
Sounds  
heard at  
Bell's Hill

These were repeated at short intervals for half an hour or more. They seemed to come from beneath the windows which is only about 8 ft. above the ground of the steeply sloping, wooded hill side. Some of the chucks were clearly like those of the Herring Gull but fainter. Every now & then I heard a light rustling of dry leaves which I thought was made by the author of the low notes & which was no more than the movements of a mouse might have caused.

What the creature was I have no idea. I

thought at the time especially of a Skunk because

of the fact that this is one of the most sedentary of night animals when it is looking for insects & grubs. But the sounds were rather bird-like as a whole & may have been uttered by a bird. I do not recall any being seen before.

Concord, Mass.

1912.

Sept. 30

House Rats have been frequenting the old cabin at Baldi Hill of late entering it by a hole which they have knuzed in the logs at the right hand corner by the fire place where there is a wood pile. A half-grown one rushed in through this opening as I was at breakfast this morning. Following it closely was an animal thicker its skin which I took at first to be a Red Squirrel for it had a wide, bushy, black-tipped tail and was bright rusty red above and pure white beneath. It turned out, however, to be a huge Weasel belonging no doubt to our large New England species (Putorius) which I had never seen living before. It looked as big as a medium sized Mink and acted not unlike one galloping to & fro over the wood pile with its nose carried low like a hound seeking scent. Presently it

Weasel  
Rat  
in  
cabin.



1912

Sept 30  
(no 2)

rouled out the Rat from among the wood and followed Weasel  
it up a rough-barked locust post that supports the roof hunting  
of the cabin. Both animals ascended this spirally winding Rat in  
around & around it at such speed that my eye could cabin.  
scarcely follow them. Just before reaching the top of the  
post the Rat was overtaken by the Weasel who  
seized him about the middle of the back and bit  
him but not, it would seem, very severely for he  
merely squeaked & flung himself kept on & went out  
through the hole with the Weasel in hot pursuit.  
Less than a minute later either he or a precisely  
similar-looking Rat came back through the hole  
and disappeared in the wood pile. Shortly after  
this the Weasel also returned by the same route  
& began a systematic & leisurely search for the  
rat. After exploring the wood pile thoroughly, finding

in and out among the sticks with easy grace and showing himself at a dozen different places along its face he ascended to a shelf just under the roof and nosed along this for half its length. Then turning back he reared up on his hind legs to inspect the ceiling which is of pine logs rather widely spaced with a board roof above them. The next instant he sprang up between two of the logs with eager haste ~~rather~~ and almost immediately dislodged the Bat who fell headlong to the wood pile and racing across it jumped to a lower shelf, alighting on a pile of magazines there. Before he could gather himself for another spring the Weasel leaped across and again seized him by the middle of the back again releasing him after a single bite which failed as had

the first, to disable him for he once more escaped through the hole squealing loudly as before. The Weasel went out after him & did not return. We sought it outside & saw it peeping out at us from a hole in the ground near the cabin. I approached it within 5 ft. when it continued to gaze at me showing only its face which looked very broad. Its eyes had now a rather placid, gentle expression but when it was hunting for the Rat in the cabin they fairly blazed appearing emerald green in some lights, in others flashing white like diamonds and positively seeming to emit reddened sparks, light.

<sup>we may credit</sup>  
If the accounts we read in books of Weasels seizing their prey by the throat & never letting go their hold until they bite into the jugular vein and suckled the blood of the hapless victim then this particular Weasel must have been a good bungler at his murderous trade for he had two perfectly fair chances to slay the Rat yet apparently did

it no more harm than an angry Squirrel  
nipping at another might have done. While the  
Rat was evidently badly frightened he <sup>after</sup> came  
back into the cabin within a minute after  
being bitten & driven out or else another Rat  
exactly like him took his place. While searching  
for him the second time the Wrasel ran not  
only along the high shelf but also out along  
a pole and a folded sail & even a gun case  
which I was sitting at table only two yards away.  
Gilbert saw him do this but did not see him  
actually battle the Rat. As I have said he  
looked as big as a half grown mouse &  
quite as bulky being very unlike in shape  
to the little, slender little common Wrasel.

I saw him last in the hole & then left him, having  
to take a train across the river



Concord, Mass.

1912.

Oct. 4

As Gilbert & I were at supper this evening we were startled by a tremendous splashing in the water in front of the cabin. As he truly said "a cow landing in the river could scarcely have made more noise". The sound was repeated several times, finally coming, it seemed, from the boat pit. I thought, at once, of an Otter and presently became fully assured that it was one when it began making a series of low, bird-like whistles with every now and then a louder, blower-like cry, short & shrill yet not exactly a whistle although nearer that than anything else. After listening to these vocal & other sounds for several moments I stole quietly out with an electric torch and threw its strong light on the canal but by that time the creature had returned to the river where I heard it splash once more beyond reach of my light. Going dark, calm & warm.

Otter in  
river front  
of cabin

Cowdoy, Mass.

1912

October 6

During my shooting & collecting days I occasionally  
saw several Flying Squirrels in Cowdoy. About 1869 D.C. Fitch  
& I saw one in the woods at Fanchon Bay "flying" from  
the trunk to the trunk early in the afternoon of a clear  
warm summer or early autumn day. Another that I  
remember was started from a hole in a dead tree on  
the Botetourt road in May or June of 1866 or 1867.  
Since I bought Ball's Hill & all the other land near it  
and ever since I have been constantly expecting to find  
Flying Squirrels in these woods but my first evidence  
of their presence there was obtained this morning when  
I picked up the freshly severed tail & some pieces of skin  
of one in a foot path at the west end of Ball's Hill.  
Something had evidently killed & eaten the Squirrel last  
night. Its tail strikes me as large enough to be that  
of a specimen of the large northern form.

Flying  
Squirrel  
at  
Ball's Hill

Concord, Mass.

1912.

Oct. 17

Clear and unseasonably warm with fresh S. W. wind.

9 Canada

Geese in

river opposite

Balls Hill.

At 3 P.M. Gilbert went to Balls Hill, from the Farm, in the automobile. On reaching the Cabin he was surprised to see almost opposite it, swimming in the river over towards the further shore, a flock of 9 Canada Geese. When he passed them within 100 yds. in his noisy - puffing Cadillac car they merely raised their heads and did not fly. Returning to the Farm he told me what he had seen. I started at once for Balls Hill on foot with H. W. Henshaw taking my 20 g. gun & some shells loaded with buck shot - the only heavy charges I could find. When we reached the Cabin the Geese were some 200 yds. below it on the other side of the river feeding in a line close to the low bushes that fringe the shore. Under cover of these they might probably have been stalked with ease but as I could not cross over without attracting their attention and as I feared to throw from walking my mossesired feet in the marsh I

Coweset, Mass.

1912.

Oct. 17  
(No 2.)

decided to try drifting down on the birds before the  
wind in a cedar canoe. They did not seem to notice me when  
I first poked out in it but I had gone only a few rods  
when they stretched up their necks and drew off from shore.  
A moment later they all rose, led by a Gander of unusual  
size, and mounting straight upward eight or ten feet alighted  
many Black Ducks. Going first down wind over the river for  
about 100 yds. they turned in over the marsh and went off  
low down to the Southward, looking lovely. Only a few  
minutes later—as I landed after woods—they alighted in  
Fairhaven Bay after having been shot at twice on way by a girl  
in a canoe. They remained about the Bay during the remainder  
of the afternoon. In the evening brother Samuel Hoad of  
Coweset got within easy range of them in his canoe  
and shot one, "a very large & heavy bird", I have been told.

Canada  
Geese  
seen at  
Ball's Hill  
Fairhaven  
Bay



Concord, Mass.

1912.

October  
September  
(No 3)

Ring-necked  
Pheasants.

Many of the local sportsmen think that the Pheasants have already driven out the Geese from certain of the Concord woods. The number of breeding Geese in the woods about one farm & at Ball's Hill has diminished very slightly within the past two or three years but their numbers continue to be well stocked in winter by birds which come to them before the middle of November from somewhere else. Thus on November 17 of the present year I started at least 11 within a few minutes walk of our house although they had been almost absent from the same places during the whole of September & October.

Nearly all the Pheasants that I have seen this autumn have been cocks in full plumage, and sometimes I have noted as many as three of them together. If the hens are equally numerous they must be near retiring & unseen.

On October 23 I flushed a hen Pheasant with her brood of 7 or 8 half-grown young in a field on the Thetford place. This was literally the only flock of Pheasants that I have seen this autumn.

Concord, Mass.

1912

September  
October

(No 2)

directly in front of it or on the stone wall almost under my  
chamber window. They seldom permitted a man who had once  
attracted their attention to approach nearer than one hundred yards  
when they would circle him by either flying or running away  
swiftly into the nearest cover. They seemed indeed to be  
not less alert & wary than Black Ducks & to have equally  
keen senses of sight & hearing. Those which I saw them  
daily & sometimes hourly, I rarely got a fair shot at one  
unless, perchance, by stumbling on some bird that was  
shuffling in long grass or dense bushes & even in such places it  
was unusual to have such an experience. Most of them spent  
the midday hours in thickets bordering or intersecting the fields.  
In windy or rainy weather they resorted freely to dense  
woods where among tall, rounded firs or oaks they might  
be seen or heard for hours from any open ground & where  
I not infrequently flushed them with or near Ruffed Grouse.

Ring-necked  
Pheasants

Concord, Mass.

1912.

September  
October.

Pheasants have multiplied exceedingly at Concord during

Ring-necked  
Pheasants.

the past two or three years. About one place they were, for the first time, decidedly more numerous than Ruffed Grouse this autumn.

In the Ball's Hill region their favorite haunts were the river meadows and bordering fields where they feed by day and roosted by night in tall grass. Often I would see them at sunset flying out into the very middle of the meadows & alighting there in rank grass or sedge. At evening & in the early morning they were very noisy & one might hear their calling notes coming from every side far & near. At the <sup>where</sup> ~~where~~ <sup>where</sup> they were equally numerous & noisy, they fed chiefly in Lawrence's & Howe's lands grass fields and in a large patch of standing sweet corn directly in front of our house. Once an old cock was seen eating grain with one chicken in the poultry yard. Although they come fairly close about the house & sometimes alighted in the driveway

Cambridge, Mass.

1912.

Nov. 7

Cloudy & oppressively warm with strong S. W. wind & heavy rain in afternoon.

A Tanager

(P. erythronotus?)

visits our

Garden

Just before going in to dinner (at 1 P.M.) I was surprised to

see a ♀ Tanager bathing at the brink of the little pond in our Garden.

Gilbert & I watched her for several minutes, standing within 15 ft. of her

in the doorway of the Museum. She was dull yellow beneath and

brunish olive above showing no trace of greenish on the back but

having the rump strongly tinged with saffron yellow and the

tail almost as reddish as that of a Hermit Thrush. The wings

were almost perfectly concolor with the back and without obvious

darkish even at the tips of the primaries. Altogether the general

coloring of this bird was so unlike that of a ♀ Scarlet Tanager and

so nearly like that of a ♀ Summer Redbird that I took her at first

to belong to the latter species. In respect to general size and to the

size and shape of her bill, however, she seemed to more nearly

agree with P. erythronotus to which I finally referred her - rather doubtfully.

After finishing her bath she spent some time in a tuft of the pond, fluttering & quivering her wings & shaking her tail. At length she flew off in the direction of Hubbard Park.



Cambridge, Mass.

1912.  
Nov. 9

Clear & cool with light westerly wind.

Tanager  
(P. rubra?)  
again seen  
in  
our Garden.

A ♀ Tanager, similar in coloring to the one seen on the 7<sup>th</sup> and without doubt the same individual bird, appeared again in our Garden this afternoon. I saw it three several times and watched it continuously from 2 to 2.30 P.M. During this period it three visited the grape arbor getting & eating on each occasion a ripe Isabella or Catawba grape. Twice it flitted through the shrubbery about the pond in front of the Museum. For the most part, however, it frequented the big white willows and tall canoe bushes at the head of the garden alighting in their tops or upper branches, 40 to 60 feet above the ground, and from these elevated perches launching out every now & then on wing in pursuit of flying insects which it captured with all the skill and ease of a true Flycatcher. It was so restless, shy and suspicious that I did not once succeed in approaching it closely but in the clear sunlight, with the aid of a good

Cambridge, Mass.

1912.

Nov. 9

(No 2.)

open glass, I was able to make out its coloring very much more satisfactorily than on the 7<sup>th</sup>. As on that occasion I was

impressed by the absence of greenish on the upper parts, by the saffron yellow tinge of the rump and by the strongly reddish tone.

In addition I now noticed for the first time that the wings were crossed by two inconspicuous bands of yellowish green, that the secondaries had light colored spots on their tips and that the bill was light brownish in color. The bird's movements seemed decidedly more spirited and active than those of a Scarlet Tanager, its posture more pronounced & grotesque. At frequent intervals it abruptly but slowly raised and depressed its tail in the manner of a Hermit Thrush. The longer I watched it the more convinced I became that despite its small size it must be a Sumner Tanager. Unfortunately it remained

to-day, as on the 7<sup>th</sup>, perfectly silent. Finally I decided to shoot it but was unable to find any suitable cartridges for the collecting pistol & when I returned to the Garden the Tanager had disappeared.

Tanager,  
P. rubra (3)  
in  
our Garden



Concord, Mass.

1912  
Nov. 24

Deer

For the first time since their return to this part of Massachusetts there has just been an open season of one week on Deer in Middlebury County. It ended yesterday when I was told by my foreman Zephaniah Prosser that ten or eleven Deer had been killed in Coosish but none, so far as he could learn, in Concord. Apparently they have been almost if not quite as numerous about one place as during previous years. At twilight was falling on the evening of September 29<sup>th</sup> I saw a north buck with large spreading horns standing in the middle of the field just across the road from our farm house. On October 8<sup>th</sup> five does were seen together in the orchard in front of our barn. On October 18<sup>th</sup> Henry W.

Huntman & I saw one buck & one small doe together, first at the

foot of lane, afterwards in the run just beyond where they stood motionless for minutes gazing at us intently with their heads facing us & gently over their backs, their bodies facing the other way. On the evening of November 17<sup>th</sup> Zeph. called me out to see a big doe in our flower garden. He had seen her a few minutes before entering 15 ft. of the wood shed. Deer tracks were noticed everywhere about Balls Hill & I saw 2 does there on October 23.







John  
18  
Jan.